Utah Department of Health

News Release

Free Rapid Testing Offered for National HIV Testing Day
New Rapid Oral HIV Test now Available

(Salt Lake City, UT) — Free rapid HIV testing will be offered throughout Utah during the final week of June as multiple health organizations mark National HIV Testing Day on June 27, 2005.

The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) strongly encourages all Utahns to get tested who have:

- never had an HIV test
- had unprotected sex since their last test
- shared a needle since their last test

A complete list of free testing times and locations are available at www.aidsinfoutah.org or by calling (801) 538-6096.

A new form of rapid oral HIV testing will be available at most testing locations, giving Utahns the option of avoiding a blood draw for their HIV test. The test is as simple as swabbing the inside of a cheek and works by detecting the antibodies that are produced by the body in response to the virus.

According to the UDOH HIV Prevention Program, more than one-third of at risk Utahns have never had an HIV test. Currently, there are nearly 3,000 people who have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Utah. Since September 2003, Utah has administered 5,233 rapid HIV tests, and identified 44 new HIV positive individuals.

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"Anyone who has either been too scared to get an HIV test or has been nervous about asking their doctor for a test should definitely get tested this June," said Lynn Meinor, Director, HIV Prevention Program Director, UDOH. "All testing is free and confidential with results available the same day and everyone will have a chance to meet with an HIV Prevention Counselor."

This is year is the 10th year that National HIV Testing Day has been held. The goal of the annual free testing event is to encourage at-risk individuals to receive voluntary HIV counseling and testing.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.